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IRISH PROVERBS.

The Milesian Irish believe that their ancient Kings, Brehons, and Fileas were men of great intelligence and wisdom,—that the sayings of *Ollamh-fodhla*, *Fithil the wise*, *Moran*, and *Cormac Mac Art*, were so many lessons of human wisdom,—that the venerable *dicta* of *Finghin*, *Kieran*, *Columbkille*, &c. were so many maxims of sacred truth, and their actions so many examples of virtue; and the wit of *Goban Saor*, the celebrated *Dædalus* of Ireland, is yet remembered and told with vivacity.

Amongst a people who entertain so high an opinion of the talent of their predecessors, it should be expected that some trace of this wisdom would still remain, and that a few at least of these proverbial sayings should be discovered; but whoever makes the enquiry, through the medium of books, will find that, amongst all the nations of the world, the proverbs of the Irish are the most vulgar, awkward, incoherent, and ridiculous, indicating a lowness of sentiment, and a total lack of mental refinement.

Proverbs owe their origin to the sayings of wise men, allusions of ancient poets, the customs and manners of nations, they are adapted to common use as ornaments of speech, set rules of instruction, arguments of wisdom, to which time has given assent, and maxims of undeniable truth. The peculiar veneration which the Irish have for their ancient proverbs, has given rise to a well known assertion: *Ní féidir an sean-fhocal do shárúghadh. It is impossible to contradict the old word (proverb.)*

From this it will, I think, be granted, that a perfect list of the proverbs of any people is, as it were, an index to the national character, or the elements of the moral notions, customs, and manners of a people.

In Ray's splendid collection of English, Scotch, Italian, Spanish, Danish, and Oriental Proverbs, the following list of Irish ones are given, which shows how Ireland has been made known to the world, by the circulation of that learned and excellent work, as a nation of blunderers and blockheads!! And no Irishman has ever since come forward to defend the wisdom of *Ollav Fodhla*, by translating and publishing a list of genuine Irish proverbs!! Shame Ireland!

Ray says, "The following proverbs are presumed to be Irish:"

1. "She is like a Mullingar heifer, beef to the heels.
2. "He is like a Waterford merchant, up to the — in business.
3. "His eyes are like two burnt holes in a blanket.
4. "Full of fun and foustre, like Mooney's goose.
5. "He looks as angry as if he were vexed.
6. "'Tis as bad as cheating the devil in the dark, and two farthing candles for a halfpenny.
7. "He'd skin a louse, and send the hide and fat to market."

These are, without doubt, modern *English-Irish* proverbs of the lowest order, and rudest nature, but they have no more to do with the wise sayings of the ancient *Milesian Irish*, than with the proverbs of Solomon, or the wise sayings of the Brahmins; the following list of genuine Irish proverbs, translated principally from Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy, will satisfy the philosophic enquirer of national character, on this head:

1. *An t-scod dofaghála's i is áilne.*
The rare jewel is the most beautiful.
2. *Air li ní breith fear gan súilbh.*
A blind man is no judge of colours.
3. *Anuair a blidheann an cat a muigh bidheann na lúcha a g raimneadh.*
When the cat is out, the mice dance.
4. *Anuair is cruadh dón chailligh caithfidh sí rith.*
When the old hag is in danger she must run.
5. *Bidh ádh air Amadán.*
Even a fool has luck.
6. *Beut ádhin a's croidhe cuilinn.*
A mouth of ivy, a heart of holly.

[The leaves of ivy are soft and smooth, those of holly rough and prickly—a metaphorical proverb.]

7. *Beatha an Staraidhe firinne.*
The historian's food is truth.
8. *Bidh borb fo sgeimh.*
Fierceness is often hidden under beauty.
9. *Bidh boirbeacht i n-geal gháire.*
There is often anger in a laugh.
10. *Bidh cluanaidhe i n-deagh-chulaidh.*
A good dress often hides a deceiver.
11. *Buaine cli na saoghal.*
Fame is more lasting than life.
12. *Briathar baoth baohantacht.*
A foolish word is folly.
13. *Bocht an Eaglais bhios gan cheol.*
The church that has no music is poor indeed.
14. *Cruasaigh an am úireamhach.*
Lay up in time.
15. *Caoín re ceamsa.*
Mild to the meek.
16. *Briseann an duthchas tre shúilbh an chait.*
Cat after kind.
"Da mheid Eolais, radharc is foghlaim
"Do gheibheann an cóbach, mac an Daoi
"Briseann an duthchas tres an m-bruid
"Tar eis gach cása do chur a g-crích.
Whatever knowledge, education, or learning,
The clown, son of the low-bred man, acquires,
His own congenial nature still appears,
After passing through every course.
17. *Claidheann neart ceart.*
Force overcomes justice.
18. *Caomhnann dochas ant-ingreamach.*
Hope consoles the persecuted.
19. *Ní thuigean an Sáthach an seang.*
The satiated forget the hungry.
20. *Codhla fada spaideann leanbh.*
Long sleep renders a child inert.
21. *Deineacht gan luas.*
Hurry without haste.
22. *Dearbhrathair leadránachta olachán.*
Drunkenness is the brother of robbery.
23. *Dúchas liagh gach anró.*
Hope is the physician of each misery.
24. *Duilghe an t-uaihbheach do cheannuighadh.*
It is difficult to tame the proud.
25. *Diomhaoinéas mian amadain.*
Idleness is the desire of a fool.
26. *Dearc sul léim.*
Look before you leap.
27. *Dearbh caraid roimh riachtanas.*
Prove a friend before necessity (poverty.)
28. *Eadtrom ór ag Amadán.*
Gold is light with a fool.
29. *Feárr deire fheidhe 'ná tus brúighne.*
The end of a feast is better than the beginning of a quarrel.
30. *Feárr dreoilín i n-dorn 'ná corr air cairde.*
A wren in the hand is better than a crane out of it.
31. *An te Chidheann amúigh fuarúigheann a chuid.*
He who is out, his supper cools.
32. *Fada cuimhne seim-leimh.*
The memory of an old child is long.
33. *Foillsightheach gach níd re haimsir.*
Every thing is revealed by time.
34. *Féadann Cat dearcadh for righ.*
A cat can look at a king.
35. *Foighid leigheas sean-ghalair.*
Patience is the cure of an inveterate disease.
36. *Foghlaim mian gach Eagnaidhe.*
Learning is the desire of the wise.
37. *Fearr' clú 'ná conach.*
Character is better than wealth.
38. *Gan oileamhain, gan mhodh.*
Without education, without ranners, i. e. he who is without education, is also &c.

39. *Gan lon, gan charaid.*
Without treasure, without friends.
40. *Gan chiste is fuar an chlu.*
Without treasure, character is cold.
41. *Gach nidlh ghabhlthar go holc inthighean go holc.*
Whatever is ill acquired, passes away ill; or whatever is got on the devil's back, falls under his belly.
42. *Gnidheann bladar caradas,*
Flattery procures friendship.
43. *Gnath ocrach fíochmhar.*
A hungry man is angry. (peevish.)
44. *Gach am ní h-eagnach saoi.*
No man is wise at all times.
45. *Gach ní daor mian gach mná.*
Every dear article is woman's desire.
46. *Is treise gliocas 'nú neart.*
Wisdom exceeds strength.
47. *Is milis fíon, is scarbh a ioc.*
Wine is sweet; to pay for it bitter.
48. *Ionmhaigh am bháis codhla.*
Sleep is the image of death.
49. *Is sodh daochain.*
Enough is a feast.
50. *Is Dall an gradh baoh.*
Foolish love is blind.
51. *Is fearr an mhaith a ta 'na an mhaith a bli.*
Present good is better than past good.
52. *Is eagnach deaghdhúine.*
A good man is a wise man.
53. *Loiteann aoradh mor-chlá.*
Satire wounds a great character.
54. *Luidheann proimpeallan for otrach.*
A BEETLE buries himself in DUNG.
55. *Luidheann cruadhtan for dhíomhuineas.*
Hardship attends idleness,
56. *Liagh gach boicht bas.*
Death is the physician of the poor.
57. *Maíng dár b ceile baothan borb.*
Woe to her whose husband is a surly fool.
58. *Maíng fheallas air a charaid.*
Woe to him who betrays his friend.
59. *Maíng a threigeas a thighearna.*
Woe to him who abandons his lord.
60. *Má's maith leat a bheith buan caith fuar agus TEITH.*
If you wish to be long-lived eat cold and hot; or if you wish to be long-lived eat cold and flee. (*fuge*).
The ambiguity lies in the last word, which signifies either the adjective *hot*, or the imperative form of the verb *to fly*.
[This is not properly speaking a proverb; but we must admit it affords a striking instance of the happy inventive powers, comprehension, and shrewdness, of the lower classes of the Irish: perhaps few instances could be adduced more happy in conception, or successful in application than this sentence, as will appear from the circumstance from which it is said to have originated. It was given as a friendly advice, a long time since, to a celebrated Irish freebooter in the town of Naas. The freebooter it appears called at an inn and ordered a hot dinner to be prepared for him, but the innkeeper recognized the freebooter, and, as a good member of the community, he deemed it his duty to send for the authorities in order to have him secured; fortunately for the freebooter, it happened that the waiter, who was preparing the dinner, had been heretofore his intimate friend and companion in many a desperate and perilous enterprise of misguided valour, but as the master was present, the waiter was afraid to inform the freebooter in plain terms that his enemies were at hand; he therefore gave him the hint as conveyed in the above ambiguous sentence, which the freebooter (being a man of the quickest apprehension) immediately comprehending, mounted his horse, which had on many previous occasions borne him in safety from his pursuers, and flying with the swiftness of the Arabian steed escaped, for that time, the strong arm of justice.]
61. *Ní fhuil gaol ag aon re saoi gan scam.*
No one is related to a man without prosperity.

62. *Ní car gach bladaire.*
Every flatterer is not a friend.
63. *Ní uaisleacht gan subhailce.*
There is no nobility without virtue.
64. *Ní fhuil ro aosta re foghuim crionachta.*
Never too old to learn wisdom.
65. *Ní fhuil saoi gan locht.*
There is no one without fault.
Nemo sine crimine vivit.
66. *Or iodhal na santach.*
Gold is the idol of the covetous.
67. *Olc sion nach maith d'aon.*
That weather is bad which is not good for some person.
68. *Otracht sodh an Liaigh.*
Sickness is the physician's feast.
69. *Rígh míofhoghlamtha is asal corónta.*
An ignorant king is a crowned ass.
70. *Sarúigheann Eagna gach saidhbheas.*
Wisdom exceeds riches.
71. *Soigtheach folamh is mo torann.*
An empty vessel makes most noise.
[Applied to a talkative man.]
72. *Saidhbheas síor subhailce.*
Virtue is eternal wealth.
73. *Sgeitheann fíon frinne.*
In vino veritas.
Wine pours out the truth.
[Applied to a drunken man who foolishly blabs out his secrets.]
74. *Tig grian a n-diadh na fearthana.*
Sunshine follows rain; i. e. joy succeeds affliction.
75. *Tig iomchar re foghlaim.*
From education comes conduct.
76. *Tos mhaith leath na h-oibre.*
A good beginning is half the work.
77. *Tosach coille a's deire móna.*
The beginning of a wood; the end of a bog.
78. *Unhlacht d' uaisleacht.*
Obedience to nobility.
79. *Fíon a n-dín, uisce amarach.*
Wine to-day, water to-morrow.
80. *Buail an ceann a's seachain an muineul.*
Strike the head, but touch not the neck; i. e. there are two ways for killing a man.

OF WEATHER.

81. *Dearg aniar is ionann a's Grian.*
Red in the west portends sunshine; i. e. when, after the setting of the sun, the west appears red, it portends that the next day will be fine.
82. *Dearg anoir is ionann a's síoc.*
Red in the east is a sign of frost.
83. *Bogha fluich na maidne, bogha tirm na trathnóna.*
Rainbow in the morning is a sign of rain; in the evening, of dry weather.*
84. *"Mathair eatha oigh.*
"Athair saille sneachta.
"Tuar fola fleacha.
"Tuar teadma tart.
"Deach do sionuibh ceó'
"Acht do mhuir ní torthach torann."

Cormac Mac Art.

Frost favours the growth of corn; (i. e. it prepares the earth for its production.)

Snow favours the growth of trees.†

Much rain is an omen of blood.

Drought is an omen of plague.

Fog is good for the seasons.

Thunder destroys the fertility of the sea.

JOHN O'DONOVAN.

* A rainbow can only occur when the clouds, containing or depositing the rain, are opposite to the sun, and in the evening the rainbow is in the east, and in the morning in the west; and as our heavy this climate, are usually brought by the westerly wind, a rainbow in the west indicates that the bad weather is on the road, by this us; whereas the rainbow in the east, proves that rain in these parts is passing from us.—*Salmonia*.

† *La mère per otto di è madre alla terra da indi in là è matriga* for a se'ennight is a mother to the earth, for ever after a step